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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/762,879
Filing Date: January 22, 2004
Appellant(s): HOLLAND ET AL.

Lawrence E. Ashery
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 10/15/2010 appealing from the Office action mailed 4/13/2010.

(1) Real Party in Interest

The examiner has no comment on the statement, or lack of statement, identifying by name the real party in interest in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The following is a list of claims that are rejected and pending in the application:

Claims 1-19 are rejected.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The examiner has no comment on the appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The examiner has no comment on the summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The examiner has no comment on the appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal. Every ground of rejection set forth in the Office action from which the appeal is taken (as modified by any advisory actions) is being maintained by the examiner except for the grounds of rejection (if any) listed under the

subheading "WITHDRAWN REJECTIONS." New grounds of rejection (if any) are provided under the subheading "NEW GROUNDS OF REJECTION."

(7) Claims Appendix

The examiner has no comment on the copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the appellant's brief.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

2002/0010743	Ryan et al.	1-2002
5,623,591	Cseri	4-1997
6,988,241	Guttman et al.	1-2006
5,875,302	Obhan	2-1999

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 12, 14-16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan et al. (US 2002/0010743) in view of Cseri (US 5,623,591).

In regard to claims 1, 18, Ryan disclosed *a method of enabling access to a data structure having a plurality of sections, said method comprising the steps of:*

associating addresses of users with respective sections of the data structure wherein each of the respective sections is comprised of a plurality of independently accessible storage areas; The names of all the collaborators assigned to one of the worksheets in the spreadsheet is stored. Ryan, [106]. Collaborators are identified by email address. Ryan [101].

granting access rights for each of the users to access the sections corresponding to the associated addresses of the respective users If the selected worksheet is not included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]

preventing any of said users from having access to any of said sections which have not been associated with the address of said any of said users, wherein the sections of the data structure exist and include data prior to said access rights being granted, and wherein any of said sections to which any of the users has been prevented access are not displayed in each of the users' respective common layer; and If the selected worksheet is not included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]

enabling each of the users to access the storage areas in the respective sections of the data structure associated with each users' respective address after said access rights are granted. Ryan, [106-107]

Ryan failed to disclose *displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*

wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections

However, Cseri disclosed *displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

In regard to claim 2, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes entering the addresses into respective linking sections of the data structure, each of the linking*

sections being associated with a portion of the sections of the data structure. Ryan, [103], assigning contributors to the worksheets of a spreadsheet workbook.

In regard to claim 3, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes associating the addresses to the respective sections of the data structure from another data structure.* Ryan, [103], assigning contributors to the worksheets of a spreadsheet workbook.

In regard to claim 5, Ryan disclosed *creating, by one of the users, a password, to limit access to the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address to the one user and other users having access rights to the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address.* Password in Ryan, [106]

In regard to claim 6, Ryan disclosed *reassigning, by one of the users, said access rights to at least a portion of the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address to another user.* Ryan, [103]

In regard to claim 7, Ryan disclosed *step of enabling includes enabling at least one of editing the respective sections by users corresponding to the associated addresses, and viewing the respective sections by users corresponding to the associated addresses.* Ryan, [106]

In regard to claim 9, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes selecting at least one section in the data structure and entering the respective address into a linking section of the data structure to link the at least one selected section with the user associated with the entered address, and said step of enabling includes enabling*

access to the at least one selected section to the user associated with the entered address. Ryan, [103]

In regard to claim 12, Ryan disclosed *a method of accessing a data structure, said method comprising the steps of:*

receiving authorization, by a user, to access at least a portion of a plurality of sections included in the data structure..., the authorization being provided by associating an address of the user with the portion of the sections in the data structure, wherein each of the sections is comprised of a plurality of independently accessible storage areas; The names of all the collaborators assigned to one of the worksheets in the spreadsheet is stored. Ryan, [106]. Collaborators are identified by email address. Ryan [101].

granting access rights for the user to access the portion of the sections responsive to the received authorization

...

preventing users other than the user from having access to any of said sections which have not been associated with the address of said any of said users, wherein the sections of the data structure exist and include data prior to said access rights being granted, and wherein any of said sections to which any of the users has been prevented access are not displayed in each of the users' respective common layer; and If the selected worksheet is not included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]

enabling the user to access the portion of the sections of the data structure associated with the address of said user, after said access rights are granted. Ryan, [106-107]

Ryan failed to disclose a common spreadsheet, displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...

wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections, and

displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet

However, Cseri disclosed a common spreadsheet, Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.

*displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

In regard to claim 14, Ryan disclosed *creating, by the user, a password, to limit access to portion of the sections of the data structure to the user and said other users having said access rights to the portion of the sections of the data structure.* Password in Ryan, [106]

In regard to claim 15, Ryan disclosed *reassigning, by the user, said access rights to at least a portion of the sections of the data structure to another one of said users.* Ryan, [103]

In regard to claim 16, Ryan disclosed *step of receiving includes at least one of receiving authorization to edit the portion of the sections, and receiving authorization to view the portion of the sections*. Ryan, [106]

Claims 8, 10, 11, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan in view of Cseri in view of Guttman et al. (US 6,988,241).

In regard to claim 8, Ryan failed to disclose *associating the addresses of the users with respective data cells of a spreadsheet included in the data structure*. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

In regard to claim 10, Ryan failed to disclose *selecting the at least one section as a data cell in a spreadsheet, and enabling access to the data cell to the user associated*

with the entered address. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

In regard to claim 11, Ryan in view of Guttman failed to disclose *said step of selecting includes at least one of highlighting the data cell and clicking on the data cell.* Ryan and Guttman both disclosed using spreadsheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that either Ryan or Guttman would have allowed highlighting and clicking on data cells to allow information to be accessed and edited.

In regard to claim 17, Ryan failed to disclose *accessing the portions of the sections as data cells in a spreadsheet.* Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy

of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

In regard to claim 19, Ryan disclosed *a method of enabling access to a data structure, said method comprising the steps of:*

associating a first [cell] with a first section of the data structure comprised of independently accessible storage areas; Ryan, [0106]

associating a second [cell] with a second section of the data structure; Ryan, [0106]

associating a first address of a first user with the first [cell]; Ryan, [0106]

associating a second address of a second user with the second [cell]; Ryan, [0106]

granting first access rights for the first user to access the first section of the data structure Ryan, [0106]

granting second access rights for the second user to access the second section of the data structure Ryan, [0106]

preventing the first user from accessing data in the second section, wherein the first and second sections of the data structure exist and include respective data prior to said first and second access rights being granted; Ryan, [0106]

enabling the first user to view data contained in only the first section of the data structure associated with the first address, after said first access rights are granted; and Ryan, [0106]

enabling the second user to view data contained in only the second section of the data structure associated with the second address, after said second access rights are granted. Ryan, [0106]

Ryan failed to disclose the sections of the data structure were cells in a spreadsheet. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

Ryan failed to disclose *on a common spreadsheet, displaying the sections each of the first user and the second user has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*

wherein the first section partially overlaps the second section without completely overlapping the second section, and

However, Cseri disclosed *on a common spreadsheet*, Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*displaying the sections each of the first user and the second user has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet ...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

wherein the first section partially overlaps the second section without completely overlapping the second section, and

Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

Claims 4 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan in view of Cseri in view of Obhan (US 5,875,302).

In regard to claim 4, Ryan failed to disclose *sending an e-mail to one of the users alerting the user of the user's ability to access the sections of the data structure associated with the user's address*. However, Obhan disclosed using a system to send notification to a user's email address. Obhan, column 6, lines 46-65. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to use email notification techniques with Ryan in order to alert users of changes to the Ryan system which were pertinent to their respective accounts.

In regard to claim 13, Ryan failed to disclose *receiving, by the user, an e-mail alerting the user of the user's ability to access the portion of the sections*. However, Obhan disclosed using a system to send notification to a user's email address. Obhan, column 6, lines 46-65. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to use email notification techniques with Ryan in order to alert users of changes to the Ryan system which were pertinent to their respective accounts.

(10) Response to Argument

Appellant argues that Ryan in view of Cseri failed to disclose *wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections.*

Ryan disclosed that a worksheet could be "hidden and locked via a password" to "thwart access to the hidden worksheets by those unauthorized to have such access." Ryan [0106] "Once the worksheets are password protected and hidden, the workbook's 'properties' page is modified. This is done to remove references to the hidden worksheets...The spreadsheet distribution program...modifies the listing of included worksheets so that it displays only those worksheets designated to be received by the recipient." Ryan [0107]

Cseri modifies Ryan by allowing the properties of the spreadsheet to be set on the cell level, and not just the worksheet level. "Each page object may also contain other objects, including cell, blocks of cells...each of which may be inspected...With block properties, the user can change...whether columns or rows are revealed or hidden; inspection of a single cell occurs in a similar manner...In this manner, the user may select block properties which affect the appearance of cell entries or of rows or columns; additionally, properties which affect the way data can be entered into blocks, such as protection...may be made." Cseri, column 14 line 63 - column 15, line 10.

Ryan established the ability to set protection values of certain worksheets in a spreadsheet workbook. Cseri disclosed that protection values could be established in

cells or blocks of cells. Ryan shows in Figure 1 the use of a spreadsheet workbook (a common spreadsheet) with worksheets as part of the workbook (a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet).

Ryan further disclosed in Figure 4 the ability for each worksheet to have separate contributors. For example, 25b has contributors user3 and user5, and 25c has contributors user3 and user4. Worksheet 25b therefore has user3's sections "partially overlapping another of said sections of another of said users". User4's section also "partially overlap[s]" user3's section "without completely overlapping" user3's section. See further Ryan [0106].

Appellant argues that Ryan in view of Cseri failed to disclose *displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet*.

Ryan shows in Figure 1 the use of a spreadsheet workbook (a common spreadsheet) with worksheets as part of the workbook (a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet). Cseri further disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A. In Figure 2A of Cseri, a spreadsheet workbook is shown with multiple spreadsheet worksheets, denoted by the tabs 'A' through 'N' accessible at the bottom taskbar of the workbook (described in Cseri as a "notebook") NOTEBK1.WB1.

Appellant argues that Ryan in view of Cseri failed to disclose *wherein any of said sections to which any of the users has been prevented access are not displayed in each of the users' respective common layer.*

Ryan disclosed that a worksheet could be "hidden and locked via a password" to "thwart access to the hidden worksheets by those unauthorized to have such access." Ryan [0106] "Once the worksheets are password protected and hidden, the workbook's 'properties' page is modified. This is done to remove references to the hidden worksheets...The spreadsheet distribution program...modifies the listing of included worksheets so that it displays only those worksheets designated to be received by the recipient." Ryan [0107]

Appellant argues there is no way to combine Ryan with Cseri. Both Ryan and Cseri are analogous art, as both deal with setting the password properties of spreadsheets in a workbook/worksheet format. The only difference between Ryan and Cseri is that Cseri teaches an individual cell or block of cells can have security properties ("hidden" value) whereas Ryan teaches this on the worksheet level. Ryan does teach the overlap of content, as shown above in Ryan [0106] and Ryan Figure 4, items 25b and 25c.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

/Jeffrey R. Swearingen/

Examiner, Art Unit 2445

Conferees:

/HASSAN PHILLIPS/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2445

/Patrice L Winder/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2452